



September 14, 2016

From: Michigan Farmers Market Association
Dru Montri, Executive Director
Chris Broadbent, Advocacy Committee Chair
Amanda Shreve, Program Director

To: Representative Al Pscholka and members of the Michigan House of Representatives
Appropriations Committee

CC: Representative Dave Pagel

RE: HB 5180 – Healthy Food Access

Thank you, Chairman Pscholka, and committee members for accepting testimony on House Bill 5180 and considering our support of this legislation. The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) is a statewide, member-based association located in East Lansing, Michigan. Our mission is to advance farmers markets to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. We have been in existence since 2006 and we currently represent more than 400 members, including more than 200 farmers and food and ag-based businesses that sell at farmers markets, as well as more than 130 of the state's nearly 300 farmers markets.

As stated in our 2016 Advocacy Priorities, we advocate for policies that work to increase consumers' access to healthy, locally produced foods through farmers markets. This includes HB 5180 which could help farmers markets invest in the infrastructure and resources they need to increase food access in their communities.

Under HB 5180, retailers, including farmers markets, could apply for a low-interest loan or grant to invest in the infrastructure and resources they need to increase the availability of fresh and nutritious food, including fruits and vegetables, in their community. We know that 1.8 million people in Michigan, including over 300,000 children, live in communities with inadequate access to fresh fruits and vegetables. We also acknowledge that making healthy foods more accessible in these communities may require a financial investment. This bill, and the Healthy Food Fund it would support, could provide retailers with the tools they need to make those investments and expand healthy food access.

Overall, we are supportive of this legislation because we support initiatives that expand access to healthy food and initiatives that invest resources in farmers markets as healthy food retailers.

Again, MIFMA supports HB 5180 as this legislation is in alignment with our mission and our vision that all Michigan residents should have access to the fresh, healthy and locally grown foods available at farmers markets.



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